

PETER JACKSON

When director Peter Jackson says that he "cobbled together" the interior of his state of the art Park Road Post movie production facility in Wellington, with fittings bought from ebay during work on his *Lord Of The Rings* Trilogy, he might also have been talking about the development of his own career.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Most of the fittings and lights and things came off eBay," Jackson said during an interview with the ABC's *At The Movies* host David Stratton. "Fran (Jackson's wife and long time collaborator) would go online and we'd find interesting door handles and lights and different fittings." While this recipe for the interior design of the 10,200 m² (110,000 ft²) building sounds ad-hoc, place it next to the career path of the three-time academy award winner's career, and it suddenly becomes downright methodical.

Jackson, who was born on 31 October 1961 in coastal backwater Pukerua Bay, near Wellington, says that his earliest inspiration didn't come from

multiple angles, spending days instead of minutes on each one in a rapacious quest for perfect detail. His post production work is similarly gruelling, each of the *Lord Of The Rings* films, for which Jackson is best known, spent more than 12 months in the post-production suite.

As the scope of *Bad Taste* developed, Jackson says he "literally ended up in the movie, playing a role in the film, because I ran out of friends." *Meet The Feebles* came next, a puppet based satire of depraved human behaviour which was branded as 'Muppet porn' or a parody of *The Muppet Show* by some critics, a claim that Jackson staunchly refutes.

The George Romero and Sam Raimi inspired zombie movie *Braindead* followed, before Jackson's big break came in the form of the Oscar nominated *Heavenly Creatures* in 1994 — a release that signalled the end of Jackson's splatter period, but not his signature macabre sense of humour.

Jackson was given a big budget for his next film, the massively underrated paranormal thriller

"The most honest form of filmmaking is to make a film for yourself. The worst type is dictated by demographics or what is hip or what kids are into." — Peter Jackson

movies: "I didn't have a huge upbringing with movies, I guess. But I did love TV." Jackson's imagination was lost in shows like rescue/adventure puppet fest *The Thunderbirds* — captured by the 'unbelievability' of the series, and the sight of his own Matchbox cars in its sets.

This genesis of Jackson's creative impulse saw him attempt a rather ambitious remake of the 1933 classic *King Kong* at the age of 12, using stop motion and an Empire State Building cobbled together from cardboard. But it wasn't until the beginning of Jackson's 'Splatter period' in 1987 that he began to carve his own niche as a filmmaker.

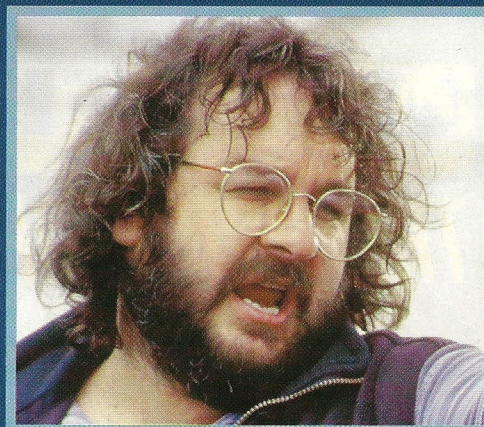
His first feature *Bad Taste* — sadly, still not available on DVD here — was, as he puts it, "my sort of single-minded desire to want to break into the film industry when New Zealand didn't really have a film industry to break into." *Bad Taste* evolved from a short into a feature, continuing the 'cobbled together' approach that Jackson's employed throughout his career. He often films scenes from

The Frighteners. But a series of misadventures, including the rescheduling of the film's intended Halloween launch date, conspired against any commercial success the film might otherwise have had.

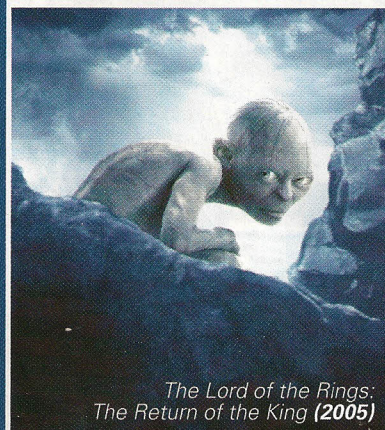
However, he would eventually bounce back triumphantly with *Lord Of The Rings* Trilogy, although Jackson, who spent eight years working on the LOTR movies (from conception to final release), has famously said that "I often think that if, at the very beginning of a project, if you really knew how hard and how long it was going to be at the start, it would probably frighten you off."

Then again, given that he finally released the remake of *King Kong* that he'd begun as a child in 2005, you get the impression that nothing can faze New Zealand's most famous director.

Peter Jackson is the producer on *District 9*, due on DVD December 30.



Career Highlights



The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2005)



Bad Taste (1988)



Meet the Feebles (1989)



Braindead (1992)



Heavenly Creatures (1994)